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ABSTRACT

A discussion of literature in critical thinking and education for democracy promotes critical thinking as one of the most reasonable educational tools to prepare students for participation in a democracy. The theories of Amy Gutmann, Jurgen Habermas, and Matthew Lipman offer insights into the various approaches to critical thinking and education for democracy. Lipman's analyses highlight 6 key elements in critical thinking: (1) skillful thinking; (2) responsible thinking; (3) judgment; (4) criteria; (5) self-correction; and (6) sensitivity to context. These six aspects must be seen against two additional commitments, central to Lipman's thought: critical thinking is dialogical, and critical thinking discussions are best carried out within a community of inquiry. Critical thinking is one model of education for democracy; others are: (1) exemplary models; (2) citizenship education; (3) values clarification; (4) cooperative education; (5) developmentalist theories (e.g., Kohlberg's theory on the development of moral reasoning); (6) the just community; (7) and participation in school governance. As shown by contrast to these other approaches, the discussion here supports critical thinking as among the most reasonable educational tools for developing rational deliberation relevant to democratic education. Contains 55 references. (IAH)

Critical Thinking and Education for Democracy

Mark Weinstein

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CRITICAL THINKING AND EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Mark Weinstein

In the following I will outline a recent conception of critical thinking and place it within the context of critical thinking seen as both an educational ideal and as the basis for an expanding practice. The purpose of the exercise is to link critical thinking to education for democracy, and to contrast critical thinking with other available approaches for achieving the goal of an educated citizenry competent to participate in democratic societies. In light of the analysis of critical thinking offered, other educational approaches to education for democracy will be seen to be lacking. Critical thinking, as I hope to show, points to concepts and practices unavailable in alternative accounts that are required for supporting the ability to make rational judgments relevant to political life, and thus, can be seen as essential for the preparation of citizens in a democracy. In addition, I will indicate a possible foundation for critical thinking drawn from critical theory. The latter points to possibilities for theoretic development; the former constitutes a recommendation relevant to concrete concerns of educational practice. Both together, constitute an argument for continuing and expanding inquiry into critical thinking as currently conceived.

1. Education for democracy and critical thinking.

The relationship between rational judgment and political action is so fundamental in the history of thought that it hardly bears mentioning. From Aristotle to Mill rational deliberation and political actions were so tightly linked that appropriate political decisions were seen as impossible in the absence of adequate deliberation. Theorists as diverse as Plato, Acquinas and Rawls all testify to the necessity of rational competence for political decision making, although, as has been argued by MacIntyre (1988), the various notions of reason are as diverse as are the political analyses that they support. This has been particularly true of theorists of democracy, for whom a citizen competent to make political judgments was generally mandated. In philosophy of education, this is best exemplified by John Dewey whose theoretic and practical efforts placed communal and self-corrective inquiry at the heart of education and at the foundation of democratic practice (Dewey, 1915, 1916).

Contemporary accounts also see rational deliberation as a prerequisite for effective citizenry (Peters, 1966; Scheffler, 1973). It is included with such items as tolerance, fraternity and knowledge of political and social institutions as valued outcomes of education appropriate to democratic practice. Even where it is not emphasized it is assumed, as in, for example, Pat White's discussions of democratic education, when she requires that citizens be able to "consider the relative weighting" of considerations relevant to adjudicating proposals that speak to the public interest (White,

1973, p. 234), or when she calls upon citizens to "deliberate with some care," lest their courageous action in the name of democratic purposes become reckless (White, 1989, p. 96).

An explicit appeal to rational deliberation is found in Amy Gutmann's recent work *Democratic Education* , where she places critical deliberation at the center of her concerns (Gutmann, 1987, pp. 44-46). She calls for, "critical deliberation" as a hedge against indoctrination (ibid., p. 44); "rational deliberation" to help children make hard choices where habits and authorities offer no clear guidance, or where laws violate the "basic principles of democratic sovereignty" (ibid., pp. 51-52); "critical thinking" as a device to help students process political materials (ibid., p. 106); and education that enables "children to deliberate rationally about questions of the good life" (ibid., p. 114), and that teaches "how to think carefully and critically" in order to help students to articulate and defend their views (ibid., p. 173).

Gutmann's account yields additional insights into the role of critical thinking in education for democracy. Gutmann takes the "core value" of democracy to be "conscious social reproduction" (ibid., pp. 14, 42). In addition to the core value, she identifies two "principled limits on political and parental authority over education" (ibid., p. 44). These are: "the principle of nonrepression (which) prevents the state, or any group within it, from using education to restrict critical deliberation of competing conceptions of the good life and the good society" (ibid., p. 44), and the principle of "nondiscrimination," preventing "the state, and all groups within it, from denying anyone an educational good on grounds irrelevant to the legitimate social purposes of that good" (ibid., p. 45).

Although Gutmann's account is well-developed, and has been well received, a recent review by Scott Bilow complains, with some justice, that her theory is "not adequately defended" (Bilow, 1988, p. 275). In particular, Bilow points out that although the two principles, identified above, are "reasonable," she "merely states the two seriatum, without any apparent connection" (ibid., p. 277). This is not the place for a detailed analysis of Gutmann's theory of democratic education, but even the beginning of a sketch of a plausible justification of her two principles in terms of the core value of social reproduction points us in direction that will prove useful for an analysis of the central role of critical thinking in democratic education.

The first step is to see just what is to be preserved by "conscious social reproduction." An answer is forthcoming once we grant an additional assumption: what constitutes "good lives and good societies" is not fixed once and for all, but rather is open to reconsideration by individuals in a democracy, and is reflected in the process of mediating among competing views. Granting this, we can indicate what is preserved by conscious reproduction in democratic societies, that is, the deliberative process itself. But, if particular groups are excluded (what nondiscrimination seeks to prevent), or particular views repressed (contrary to nonrepression), critical

deliberation is truncated in that alternatives are made unavailable. This leads us to a consequence of the core values and the principles: *the purpose of critical deliberation is to maximize the possibility of reconsidering what constitutes good lives and good societies by maximizing the available alternatives.*

The consequence, italicized above, may be rejected, as Bilow points out (ibid., p. 277), without denying the core democratic value of conscious social reproduction. It should be noted, however, that its rejection seems inconsistent with the trend in most modern democracies to extend the range of participation in social deliberation, including previously disenfranchised members of society. This trend, if it is carry the weight of nondiscrimination and nonrepression, requires additional backing. Such backing is available in recent attempts to develop anti-foundationalist theories of rationality, and is reflected, although without the same depth of theoretic support, in recent discussions of critical thinking. It seems to me that anti-foundationalist accounts of rationality are of particular relevance to democratic theory since they leave open the possibility that what counts as rational at any given time is open to reconsideration, thus placing deliberation at the center of concern.

Anti-foundationalism can be seen as particularly suited to contexts of moral and political deliberation, a view supported by theorists as varied as Gadamer and MacIntyre; Derreda and Rorty. It is worth noticing, however, that anti-foundationalism is not limited to deliberation about values. Recent philosophy of science has been particularly important in setting the stage for anti-foundationalism, by showing that even within science, the most paradigmatically rational form of inquiry, an appeal to a foundation independent of the procedures of rational inquiry within particular scientific fields, is difficult to reconcile with scientific practice and progress. The role of competing alternatives is equally apparent in the reconstruction of scientific rationality. Major voices such as Popper, Feyerabend, Kuhn, Lakatos, and Laudan, whatever their disagreements about the particulars, point to the essential role of competing views in scientific deliberation.

Jurgen Habermas, an important critic of traditional foundationalist theories of rationality , is a particularly interesting case in point. Concerned with both social and scientific deliberation, Habermas sees rationality grounded in "communicative action," a requirement of "socially coordinated action" basic for the survival of the species (Habermas, 1981, p. 397). Such coordination, within the context of "practical reason," is the "interlacing of egocentric calculations of utility ... as a socially integrating consensus about norms and values instilled through cultural tradition and socialization" (ibid., p. 101). Communicative action is based on shared notions of validity, but as McCarthy summarizes in his introduction to *The Theory of Communicative Action*, "The key to (Habermas') notion of reaching understanding is the possibility of using reasons or grounds to gain intersubjective recognition for criticizable validity claims ... That is, that in each of these dimensions (theoretic, practical and aesthetic) it is possible to reach agreement about

disputed claims by way of argument and insight and without recourse to force other that of reasons and grounds" (ibid., pp. x-xi). Such argumentation is not, however, isolated from the "lifeworld" of the participants, that is, "the world-concepts and validity claims...presupposed as unproblematic" (ibid., p. 70). The lifeworld generates a set of concepts and principles of validation which constitutes the store of "interpretative work of preceding generations against which critical rationality strives" (ibid., p. 70). The lifeworld permits rational communication, but limits it as well, since, "The more cultural traditions predecide which validity claims, when, where, for what, from whom, and to whom, must be accepted, the less the participants themselves have the possibility of making explicit and examining the potential grounds on which their yes/no positions are based" (ibid., pp. 70-71). Thus, critical rationality is concerned with the cultural and historical variability of lifeworld structures. This variability is not, however, irreducible; it requires reduction to defensible principles of validation through communicative action and rational dialogue (ibid., Chapter 1:2), and takes as its rational limit the "ideal speech situation" in which there is "unrestricted discussion," "unimpaired self-representation," and "full complementation of understanding" (Habermas, 1970, pps. 368-70).

The relationship between rational deliberation, as developed by critical theorists such as Habermas, and critical thinking as recently elaborated, is evident from the definitions of critical thinking put forward and from critical thinking's emphasis on dialectic, through which rationality evolves as the result of appropriate practice. So Harvey Siegel, seeing critical thinking as being "appropriately moved by reasons" (Siegel, 1988, pp. 32ff.), sees reasons themselves as reflecting "a tradition at a time." But traditions evolve, and as they do, "so do the principles which define and assess reasons. So what counts as a good reason in a tradition may change over time" (ibid., p. 135). Notice, relating good reasons to evolving traditions does not entail relativism, since principles which determine the compellingness of reasons at a time apply to all putative reasons impartially and universally (ibid., p. 135.). The relation between reason and ongoing comparative deliberation is even more deeply rooted in Siegel's other recent contribution, where the assessment of alternative frames is linked to an underlying practice of giving and assessing reasons (Siegel, 1987, for example pp. 9-10; pp. 43-44).

No other theorist in the critical thinking movement addresses the underlying issues with the depth of philosophical analysis that Siegel offers, but all echo his commitment to dialogue and the process of giving and assesssing reasons in light of alternatives. So Robert Ennis, for example, offers as a definition of critical thinking, "reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do," and lists, "Look for alternatives" and "Be open-minded" as among the requisite "dispositions" of a critical thinker (Ennis, 1987, p. 12). He sees "*Interacting with others* in discussions, presentations, debates and written pieces as crucial for critical thinkers." (ibid., p. 23, italics in original). Richard Paul, a central figure in the critical thinking movement, requires "strong-sense" critical thinking,

which involves, in addition to concern with other person's arguments, a focus on the critical thinker's own world views and interests. World views are the sum of cognitive and affective elements that determine the stance from which argumentation is put forward, and reflect interests that support bias and other inappropriate argumentative moves (Paul, 1982, pps. 4ff.; for the range of ideational elements that support bias, see Weinstein, 1990).

Paul places dialectic exchange at the center of an appropriate account of critical thinking, rejecting "atomic arguments" as the focus of critical thinking and requiring "a more dialectical/dialogical approach (in which) arguments need to be appraised in relation to counter arguments" (ibid., p. 3). He sees critical thinking as essentially concerned with "multi-logical issues," complexes of facts and values that require analysis from a variety of points of view and using many approaches. To be able to deal critically with such issues Paul requires that the critical thinker must "recognize(e) the centrality of multilogical thinking, the ability to think accurately and fairmindedly within opposing points of view and contradictory frames of reference" (Paul, 1987, p. 376).

Matthew Lipman, another major critical thinking theorist, also sees dialogue and the consideration of alternatives as essential to his approach. Philosophy for Children, Lipman's program for developing, among other things, critical thinking, takes from philosophy an essential concern with "consider(ing) alternative ways of acting, creating and speaking." This requires that children must "persistently appraise and examine their own assumptions and presuppositions, question what other people take for granted, and speculate imaginatively concerning ever more comprehensive frames of reference" (Lipman, et. al., 1980, p. 102, and see chapters 6 & 7). In a recent attempt to clarify the relation of dialogue to critical thinking, Douglas Walton concludes, "the common core of basic critical thinking skills underlying critical reasoning in each discipline is the key ability to look at both sides of an argument. The structure behind this ability is the concept of argument as dialogue" (Walton, 1989, p. 182).

Given the centrality of the evaluation of competing alternatives through dialogue in theories of critical discourse, it should not be surprising the contemporary advocates of critical thinking see democratic process as essentially related to their own views. This is apparent in the writings of critical thinking theorists concerned with education, who see preparing students for participation in democracy as an educational goal that justifies their call for educational reform through critical thinking. So, for example, Robert Glazer cites traditional philosophers, the "founding fathers" of American democracy, and recent reports by commissions studying education, to support his view that "free public institutions would fail if the state neglected to cultivate among the populace generally, and in the youth particularly, a sufficient degree of social understanding and educated judgment necessary to think intelligently about public issues" (Glazer, 1985, p. 24). Glazer identifies the complex of understanding and judgment that he indicates, with critical thinking characterized as "an *attitude* of being

disposed to consider in a thoughtful, perceptive manner...*knowledge* of the methods of logical inquiry...(and) *skill* in applying these methods" (ibid., p. 25). Similar views are maintained by the other major figures mentioned above, including Paul (1984), Lipman (1988, chapter 5) and Siegel (1988, pp. 60-61).

Given these deep continuities, an obvious question arises: What does the recent concern with critical thinking add to available accounts of rational deliberation within the context of democratic education? Rather than attempt to furnish my own survey of conceptions of rational deliberation relevant to education for democracy, I will use Gutmann's account in *Democratic Education* as a characteristic example. I will first enumerate the educational strategies she mentions, and then contrast each strategy in light of goals and practices common within recent discussions of critical thinking. But first, let us turn to a brief analysis of critical thinking as currently understood.

2. Recent developments in critical thinking.

The past decade has seen a renaissance in critical thinking theory and practice, and a growing sense among educators in the United States and Canada, that critical thinking can serve as the basis for educational reform. This renewed interest was fueled by a number of concerns: unhappiness with the preceding focus on basic skills, a concern with the needs of a rapidly changing and increasingly techologically based economy, deeply motivated philosophical concerns with education appropriate for full personal development, and as mentioned earlier, the requirements of education for democracy (Weinstein, 1988a). Recent literature in the field has included definitions and analyses of this central educational concept, ranging from the broad definition of Siegel (1988) mentioned earlier, to the detailed articulation of skills and dispositions found in the work of Ennis (1987). But whatever the particulars, all theorists agree on the centrality of autonomous judgment as the goal of critical thinking education, and are increasingly joining with Paul on the need to apply critical thinking to the biasing assumptions of the critical thinker herself, as well as to the views of others. (See Paul, 1982, for an extremely influential statement of this position.)

All of the theorists just mentioned offer plausible analyses of critical thinking, but the most useful characterization seems to me to be that of Matthew Lipman, who sees critical thinking to involve: "*skillful, responsible thinking, that facilitates good judgment because it (a) relies on criteria, (b) is self-correcting, and (c) is sensitive to context* " (Lipman, 1988a, p. 3, italics in the original.). His account highlights six key elements in critical thinking, each of which requires some brief elaboration.

(1) The requirement that critical thinking be *skillful thinking* connects it with epistemological and other normatively relevant considerations of practice. Skillfullness points to the fact that critical thinking is embedded in

contexts that furnish reliable information and warranted methodology. Critical thinking is not indifferent to the norms of the various fields, rather it looks to appropriate practice for the standards that have proved useful so far in supporting warranted inquiry of all sorts, and for the most reliable information from which inquiry draws its relevance and strength.

(2) *Responsible thinking* points to the relationship between the critical thinker and the community that he or she addresses. The critical thinker sees an obligation to present reasons in light of acceptable standards, or to challenge such standards by relevant and persuasive argument. Such reasons are subject to the judgment of competent members of fields relevant to the issues involved, and the critical thinking is obliged to address such members and reflect upon their judgments when making claims and presenting arguments and analyses.

(3) Through the focus on *judgment*, critical thinking is seen as directed towards non-routine thinking, thinking that can not be adequately based on algorithms or other mechanical procedures. It is called for in those situations in which considerations must be weighed and alternatives assessed, situations that call for the assessment of priorities and determinations of truth and relevance.

(4) *Criteria* are the most decisive considerations appealed to in an instance of critical thinking. Criteria are those reasons that reflect the critical thinker's assessment of the essential factors to be taken into account when offering an analysis, or when supporting and challenging a claim. Lipman offers a number of examples that indicate what he has in mind by criteria; these include: "standards; laws, by-laws, regulations, charters, canons; ordinances, guidelines and directions; precepts, requirements, specifications, stipulations, limits; conventions, norms, regularities, uniformities, covering generalizations; principles, assumptions, presuppositions, definitions; ideals, purposes, goals, aims, objectives; tests, credentials, experimental findings; methods, procedures, policies" (ibid., p. 4). A critical thinker, thus, is called upon to make the framework of her argument clear, and to make available to her interlocutors, the considerations that she takes as crucial to the inquiry in which she is engaged. Generally, the criteria appealed to reflect the central concepts and methods in the field or fields relevant to the inquiry at hand. But as we shall see immediately below, criteria are not taken as absolute, rather, then may be questioned, and changed or even replaced, as critical thinking progresses.

(5) *Self-correction* requires that thinkers use critical thinking processes as a method for exposing and correcting the procedures employed by the thinker herself. A critical thinker subjects the ongoing process to reflective scrutiny; both the substantive criteria employed and the procedural norms that characterize her reasoning are open to critique and reevaluation.

(6) *Sensitivity to context* points to an aspect of critical thinking that complements the appeal to general criteria. Sensitivity to context demands that the application of criteria to cases is scrutinized with an eye to the appropriateness of the criteria in use, and their possible modification, in light of the particulars of the situation that prompts the judgment. The critical thinker, thus, sees criteria in relation to the context of their application. The context determines the relevance of plausibility of the criteria employed, and furnishes particular circumstances that may require specific alterations of the criteria when applied to the case at hand.

These six aspects of critical thinking must be seen against two additional commitments, central to Lipman's thought. Critical thinking, as before, is *dialogical*, that is, it involves ongoing discussion in which criteria are put forward, contexts identified, and considered, and the process subjected to ongoing assessment. In addition, critical thinking discussions, on Lipman's view, are best carried out within a *community of inquiry*, that is, within a group of individuals for whom the pursuit of inquiry and the norms that it entails are the governing considerations. (See, for example, Lipman, et. al., 1980, pp. 22ff., pp. 45ff.; Lipman, 1988, for example, pp. 67ff.; pp. 143ff.) A critical thinker, through dialogue, strives after truth and other normatively appropriate goals. The outcome of inquiry is to be judged, for example, in terms of epistemological rather than rhetorical norms; in light of moral ends rather than mere expediency. In addition, a community of inquiry and the rational dialogue that it supports, requires a focus on issues rather than individuals. Communities of inquiry do not look to the status of the persons involved, except in so far as that status is relevant to the well-functioning of inquiry. And so, communities of inquiry are essentially egalitarian, tend to be inclusive rather than exclusive, and foster increased participation by the individuals involved.

3. Critical thinking and other models of education for democracy

We now turn to a comparative assessment of various approaches to education for democracy in light of the discussion of critical thinking. We will take Gutmann's review of available models in *Democratic Education* as a fair representation of the available alternatives relevant to education that supports participation in democracy. We will enumerate the approaches that Gutmann includes, and then turn to their evaluation using the insights that critical thinking provides. Naturally, in so far as Gutmann's presentation is incomplete, the comparison is inconclusive. Nevertheless, it can serve as an indication of a procedure for further comparative analysis and criticism.

Gutmann first discusses values clarification (Kirschenbaum, 1976), whose objectives are "to help students' understand and develop their own values...(and)...to teach them respect for the values of others" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 55). She then cites William Bennett's (1985) view that there should be less "emphasis on discussing moral issues and more emphasis on inculcating democratic character through "the quiet power of moral example" (ibid., p. 57). Bennett's view may be characterized as offering an

exemplary model, one that requires exemplifications of appropriate instances, instead of relying on moral or political reasoning. She includes approaches based on Piaget's stage theory of cognitive and moral development, citing Rawls (1971), whose objective is to move students from the "morality of authority" to the "morality of principles" (ibid., pp. 59-60). She discusses Kohlberg's work with "just community" schools (Kohlberg, 1970; and Mosher & Sullivan, 1976) which extends moral education based on developmental stage theory to include "the democratic goal of sharing the rights and responsibilities of citizenship" (ibid., p. 61). She mentions cooperative learning (Slavin, 1981) within the limited, but essential, context of improving student's attitudes towards people of other races (ibid., p. 63). She includes Dewey's (1915) attempt to develop "an embryonic democratic society" (ibid., p. 93) at the Laboratory School of the University of Chicago. Finally, she refers to civics courses (ibid., pp. 104-107), whose goal, quoting Webster (1965), is to "increase the student's knowledge about political institutions and processes, make him a more interested and loyal (but not superpatriotic) citizen, and increase understanding of his own rights and the civil rights of others" (ibid., p. 105). We now compare each of these to the model of critical thinking that Lipman provides, criticizing them, in turn, in light of the requirements that critical thinking exposes. The various models will be presented in an order that reflects increasing student involvement in rational and deliberative processes appropriate to participation in democracy.

(a) *Exemplary models*, as indicated above, focus on appropriate behaviors which are modeled by presenting instances of appropriate moral and political behavior to students. These serve in place of moral discussion. In the exemplary model, the principles that underlie appropriate behaviors and exemplifications of "good character" may be articulated. But what is most important, is that teachers and principals "live the difference (between right and wrong) in front of pupils" (Bennett, 1985). This approach can be criticized from the perspective of critical thinking on a number of counts. First, exemplifications taken alone, do not include the criteria upon which the justification of the exemplary act relies. Imitation of good behaviors can hardly be relied on to foster the ability to generalize to new and, perhaps, apparently dissimilar circumstances. Second, even if the principled ground upon which the action is based is offered, principles frequently underdetermine their application to cases. Principles need to be informed by consideration of the context of their application. Without practice in the reasonable application of principles to cases, there is little reason to expect that students will master the complex intellectual activities that support moral deliberation. This seems to be required if principles are to be correctly applied, especially in situations where first impressions may afford diverging intuitions. (See Gutmann, 1987, pp. 57ff. for related points.) There is, however, a more basic problem, apparent when exemplary models are seen in light of the requirement of self-correction.

Even on the most conservative reading of democratic practice, received values are open to reinterpretation and critique in light of changing

conditions. The authority of past practice is not the court of last resort in a democracy. Rather, democracy requires ongoing renegotiation of basic commitments, and a reassessment of particular values. Unless we reject the core ideal of the deliberative citizen, democratic education that is limited to exemplification must be seen as inadequate, for it does not prepare students for the central task of citizenship; the ability to "deliberate critically among the range of good lives and good societies" (ibid., p. 44).

(b) Similar complaints may be directed at *citizenship education* as represented by courses in civics This traditional model of education for democracy relies on cultural transmission. Citizenship education presents instances of democratic practice, rehearsing "the history of (the student's) own country (and praising)...illustrious heroes and statesman." In addition it "should increase the student's knowledge about political institutions and processes" (Webster, 1965 pps. 64-5). This is done in order to exhibit salient elements of democratic history and traditions. It generally includes basic information about political systems and frequently involves students in model procedures, that even if peripheral to the actual governance of institutions (classroom election and the like), incorporate basic elements of democratic practice This model suffers from all of the infelicities of the previous approach. In addition, it exacerbates the problem of self-correction by creating tensions between the centrality of appeals to past practices in making political judgments, and contemporary or future reassessments in light of the inadequacy of such practices as measured against the demands of nonrepression and nondiscrimination.

Both approaches, considered so far, are liable to additional criticism. Both violate student autonomy by placing the locus of decision making outside of the realm of students' rational deliberations. And both tend towards superficiality through their emphasis on particular behaviors (exemplificatory education) and particular facts (civics courses), rather than the underlying principles that the particulars reflect. The charge of superficiality may be leveled against the next model, values clarification, although in another regard.

(c) *Values clarification* involves students in the active presentation and analysis of values in order to help them to "understand and develop their own values" and to "teach them respect for the values of others." It eschews the transmission of values maintaining that "none of us has the "right" set of values to pass on to other people's children" (Simon, 1976, p. 132). Its relation to democracy is clear; values clarification mirrors the thoughtful involvement of citizens in the articulation of their own value stances and in the consideration of those of others. This, presumably, prompts an awareness of the range of considerations that underlie political decisions reflected in democracy. As is well known, values clarification has been criticized on the grounds of its advocacy of moral relativism (for example, Kohlberg, 1981, pps 10-12). This charge has not been accepted by its advocates who claim that they value, among other things, "rationality ... justice ... creativity ... freedom ... (and) ... equality" (Kirschenbaum, 1976, p.

122). But whatever the cogency of the claim that values clarification exemplifies or even supports such values, it is clear that the values clarification curriculum does little to help students see the appropriateness of these values through a principled examination of the values it purportedly sustains. Values clarification does not furnish the necessary conceptual apparatus to support rational deliberation in respect of the values appealed to, and in light of competing points of view. From the perspective of critical thinking, values clarification fails to furnish criteria for judgment, and omits the central concern of rational self-correction. These combine to render it inadequate as a basis for both moral and political reasoning required for full participation in deliberation within a democracy.

(d) *Cooperative education* is subject to similar complaints. Whatever the virtue of collaborative educational practices for forming dispositions needed for democratic participation, they fail to provide insight into requisite rational procedures, since they, by themselves, do not furnish a conceptual framework for reasoning about values. Democratic education, on the model of critical thinking, must do more than offer the occasion, and the propensity, to engage in cooperative practices, it must help develop competency in the identification and application of principles of reasoning appropriate to deliberation about the good life and the good society. These as, Lipman has argued, require reasoning skills including, "forging definitions, drawing inferences, making connections and distinctions and reasoning analogically;" the internalization of "the social mechanisms of rationality in institutional practice...(such as) due process and the rule of law;" and fair mindedness, "the ability to treat like cases similarly and different cases differently" (Lipman, 1988, pp. 49-50). In addition, political deliberation must include the basic concepts and principles of ethics (ibid., pp. 51ff.), and what he calls the "craft of moral practice," the application of reasoning skills, inquiry skills, concept-formation skills, and meta-cognitive awareness to issues of values (ibid., chapter 6).

(e) If values clarification and cooperative education are lacking an adequate theoretical framework sufficient to support rational deliberation, *developmentalist theories* of moral reasoning are, arguably, too theory bound. Kohlberg's work on the development of moral reasoning serves as a illustrative example. It is well known that moral development rests upon both normative arguments and empirical results, Kohlberg seeing his theory as a bridge between the two domains (Kohlberg, 1971). Whatever the judgment of Kohlberg's success in bridging the is-ought gap, it is clear that any analysis of the practice of moral and political reasoning must be sensitive to both sorts of considerations. I will briefly sketch the main points of an argument that shows why developmentalism is too theoretically restrictive in both its normative and empirical assumptions.

The argument stops short of challenging Kohlberg's basic insight into the central role of universal norms in moral reasoning. Reasoning of all sorts is normatively assessed in relation to rules and principles, and logical structures are essentially involved in the articulation and application of

principles to cases. Rules that govern reasoning are clearly at different levels of abstraction, and abstractions may be seen as hierarchically organized in light of criteria such as scope and universality. But, as Habermas concludes, "Kohlberg formulated a correct intuition with the wrong concepts" (Habermas, 1990, p. 243), by offering a logically structured moral hierarchy where an analysis of the rules that govern rational moral dialogue are required. Such an analysis extends far beyond the formalist structures that Kohlberg, following in Piaget's neo-Kantian footsteps, takes as essential. As we can only briefly indicate here, the tradition of analyzing reasons in terms of formal principles derived from logic is open to challenge on both philosophical and empirical grounds (See, Weinstein 1988b for an extended discussion.)

First we look at the Kohlberg's formalist moral hierarchy. The availability of a hierarchy of moral concepts based on increasing generality is no longer as compelling an argument for the predominance of the most abstract elements, as might have been the case when Rawls and other neo-Kantians dominated ethical discussions. The priority of principled ethics has been challenged by, for example, MacIntyre (1981) and Williams (1981), whose work reflects a greater appreciation of the variety of fundamental moral arguments, and the role of context and circumstance in moral reasoning (MacIntyre, 1988; Williams, 1985). Thus, abstract categories of moral reasoning seem less adequate to a general account of moral discourse than might have once been thought. Abstract moral principles, generally speaking, underdetermine their application to cases, the particulars shape and bend the principles in light of the task at hand. In addition, formal argument structures only come alive through the particular practices that constitute the dialogic context within which they are put forward. Arguments are put forward by people within social and historical contexts that include particular patterns of argument and typical priorities and interests. Abstract moral principles apply to situations whose details furnish more of the morally relevant issues than the typical formalist theory can admit. What Kohlberg tries to bypass, issues related to "the good life," must be taken into account for adequate moral judgments to be made. Kohlberg's theoretic development, itself, shows an increase in substantive values over time, stretching the formal apparatus so as to include, for example, benevolence and human life (Kohlberg, et. al., 1990). But the model, by identifying such root moral concepts as affiliation and interest with early stages of moral development, impoverishes moral discourse by ruling out the particulars that, in interaction with universal norms, constitute the practice of moral reasoning.

The force of context in determining reasoning extends beyond the moral and political. Empirical research on reasoning of all sorts points to issues barely visible from the logic based formalism that Kolhberg's hierarchies presuppose. And so, second, some brief remarks on the status of the empirical framework that Kohlberg takes from Piaget. Piaget's framework, as Kohlberg sees it, defines stages in terms of abstract properties of formal systems, for example, reciprocity. Analogues to such

properties (and some substantive moral assumptions as well), then determine the order of the moral hierarchy of concepts. We have seen that this is questionable from a meta-ethical point of view, what has also come under question is the adequacy of formal models for reasoning in non-moral contexts and including reasoning in such formal realms as mathematics and statistics. (See, Revlin and Mayer, 1978 for deductive reasoning; Nisbett and Ross, 1980 for inductive reasoning.) It is not that the normative status of formal rules is denied, rather, it is the sufficiency of such a limited set of normative concerns for an adequate account of reasoning, given the complexity of the reasoning process that supports and determines the employment of formal and other abstract principles in reasoning Formal rules seem to play a smaller role in reasoned discourse than developmentalists have supposed. The adequacy of formal models for understanding reasoning becomes must be assessed against work in cognitive psychology who have identified contextual and other information processing elements that selectively affect individual's ability to apply normatively appropriate principles in particular contexts What evidence a person accesses, and how she responds to argument is qualified by many factors in addition to logical principles (Eiser, 1984); fundmental cognitive processes, including estimating correlations and categorizing, are similarly subject to many context-dependent factors that swamp the effect of overall logical form in determining the character of judgments (Hamilton, 1981).

Moral developmentalism, in addition, through its adherence to a formalism promotes a concern with over-all stages that masks the variability of moral reasoning in response to the particulars. The recent research indicated above, supports the growing sense among cognitive psychologists that individuals employ different cognitive strategies in response to situational variables, as against logical form. So, for example, errors in generalizing occur in response to, what seems to be logically irrelevant features, who is being looked at, for example, and prior knowledge of the domain. Errors do not reflect a general inability to generalize, rather indicate a selective response to extra-logical variables. Factors such as the complexity of the issues, familiarity with the domain, previous attitudes and beliefs, and a sense of affiliation with the individuals in respect of whom judgments are made, all affect the particulars of judgment, including the principles cited and the adequacy with which they are employed.

Reasoning includes logic, but it includes much else. An so as recent work in informal logic and argumentation theory testifies (See, Govier, 1987; Eemeren, 1983), and as our brief indicators from ethical theory and empirical psychology attempt to support, an adequate theory of reasoning must extend beyond formal concerns. This gives us reason to wonder about the adequacy of developmentalism as an adequate theory in general. But it is not merely such theoretic and empirical factors that point to the inadequacy of developmentalism as a model for democratic education. There are additional factors, peculiar to the context of political practices within democracies, that mitigate against moral developmentalism as well.

Moral developmentalism, by presenting a hierarchy of moral reasoning that precludes all points of view from being of *prima facie* worth, violates the principle of nondiscrimination. As Gutmann points out, since developmentalist research supports the view that very few individuals are at the highest stage of "principled morality" (Kohlberg, et. al., 1984), developmentalists must disregard the moral reasoning of most students, parents and teachers, in so far as the reasoning of some others exhibit a higher stage that incorporates more desirable cognitive structures. Thus, developmentalism, when instantiated in educational contexts, is paradoxically in the position of requiring "'academic freedom' from democratic accountability" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 63), in those cases where teachers an other experts are at a higher stage of development than most other individuals. Moral reasoners at higher stages are immune from the criticism of individuals whose moral reasoning is limited to principles drawn from lower and less adequate stages. This results in developmentalists removing "one of the most important political decisions from democratic control--the education of future citizens ... (and therefore entails a commitment to) ... using nondemocratic means to achieve the end of democratic self-government" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 63).

Developmentalism, by turning an empirical hypothesis into a normative principle, renders favored deliberations immune from any argument that relies in less highly valued argumentational structures. Thus, a range of argumentation is rendered unavailable as potential critics. Further the highest stage, being seen as maximal, is itself rendered immune to rational criticism. Since lower stages of moral reasoning include characteristic value stances, all of these are ruled out prior to rational dialogue, thus placing limits on the free exchange of ideas within the dialogical community, contrary to the principles that underlie, for example, the ideal speech situation as articulated by Habermas, or any other theory of dialogue that requires that all views be given, *prima facie*, equal hearing. The priority of universal principles in rational dialogue does not entail their univocal application in cases. And without such univocality, the importance of differences in political disputes increases. As Habermas states in a recent critique of Kohlberg, "... universalization must remain powerless unless there also arises, from membership in an ideal communication community, a consciousness of irrevocable solidarity, the certainty of intimate relatedness in a shared life context" (Habermas, 1990, p. 246). Developmentalism sees differences that preclude rational community, yet rational community is the optimal context for reasoning, accepted as an ideal that serves as a limit to which all approximations tend. In contrast, critical thinking sees all points of view as having fundamental status as available argumentational stances, or particular arguments. The dialogic process, employing a wide range of principles relevant to particular as well as universal concerns, reflecting different methodologies, criteria for facticity and relevance, and open to the range of available standpoints within the dispute, is the forum for resolving moral disputes.

Developmentalism must, thus, face the charge of creating a less than

optimal context for critical deliberation. This is especially true where education for democracy takes place with young children, presumably at lower stages of development than their teachers, and therefore, incapable of fully understanding arguments teachers may find most compelling. By substituting the authority of higher stage reasoning for ongoing rational deliberation, developmentalism inhibits the formation of a community of rational interlocutors, whose equality within the discourse community is at the heart of the procedures which define rational social discourse itself. Critical thinking, on the other hand, requires all argumentation to be supported by overt appeals to criteria, demands that the dialogic process includes the points of view of all interlocutors, and sees rational persuasion as the only appropriate end.

The substitution of stage defined appropriateness in lieu of dialogically generated standards for the adequacy of arguments is even more problematical , given the wholistic and maturational presuppositions of stage theory. Stages are determined in light of the preponderate argument structure exhibited (Kohlberg, 1984). Thus, determinations of the adequacy of reasoning are indifferent to particular arguments, focusing instead on reoccuring trends. This shifts the focus of debate from the particulars of issues and onto the arguer, contrary to the ideal of a community of inquiry. The concern with development, rather than with issues, raises another problem from the perspective of critical thinking. Since development is seen to be a maturational response to complexity, moral reasoning is not available to principled remediation. There is no point in informing students of ethical arguments that are beyond their maturational competency. Thus, instruction tends to focus on the interactive responses of students to dilemmas rather than on the comparative assessment of criteria in use.

Needless to say, if developmentalism is correct, much of critical thinking, especially the requirement that criteria by made explicit and subject to rational scrutiny, is misplaced. But here the increasing evidence that children of all ages can in fact engage in principled reasoning, if afforded school experiences that help them to identify and apply cognitive operations of the sort listed at the end of paragraph (d) above, points to a problem in the developmentalist program itself (Lipman & Gazzard, 1986). Lipman's apparent success in developing higher-order reasoning in even young children parallels the fundamental criticism of Piaget found, for example, in Donaldson (1978) and Carey (1985), whose work offers a reinterpretation of characteristic developmentalist results in light of contextual factors that point away from the maturational interpretation common to the work of stage theorists. What such arguments and practices support is that reasoning competence is variable, reflecting the while range of available procedures, but in different regards and at different levels of sophistication.

None of this is to say that children are indistinguishable from adults, in respect of their rational competency. The problem of rational community among cognitive unequals is an enormous problem for all discourse-based

theories of reason. We will present one critical thinking attempt to address the problem in part (g) below.

(f) Similar arguments are available against the approach to moral reasoning typical of the *just community*, in so far as it includes a commitment to developmental stage theory (Kohlberg, 1985). There are, however, other problems with children learning democracy by participating in just communities that require student involvement in school governance. Gutmann sees such efforts as promoting, at most, the "morality of association" rather than principled morality (Gutmann, 1987, pp. 61ff.). These problems confound the concerns with developmentalism by raising the stakes. Just what that means will be dealt with immediately.

(g) *Participation in school governance* is exemplified both by just community schools that use a developmentalist model of moral reasoning and others, most notably, the Laboratory School at the University of Chicago, where in Dewey's words students experience a "miniature community, an embryonic society" (Dewey, 1915, p. 18). Although Gutmann, and others, have seen Dewey's efforts to be an available model for democratic education, there are problems with the approach. Gutmann, for example, maintains that the Laboratory School was "an embryonic society because it elicited a commitment to learning and cultivated the prototypical democratic virtues among its student, not because it treated them as the political or intellectual equals of its teachers" (Gutmann, 1987, p. 93). This is a plausible result of all governance schemes that include student participation. Whether student participation in school governance is theoretically motivated by developmentalism or by pragmatist approaches, it seems clear that children have neither the responsibility for making actual school policy decisions, nor information and deliberative competence adequate to the task. This, although justifiable on a variety of grounds (Weinstein, 1988), is contrary to the democratic principles of nondiscrimination and nonrepression. What does critical thinking have to offer to resolve the dilemma created by the need for equality in the deliberative process and the *de facto* inequality of students as compared with teachers and administrators?

A solution is found within the practice that Lipman recommends in his program, Philosophy for Children, with its commitment to the community of inquiry. Community of inquiry requires that all participants have the *prima facie* right to have their views seriously considered within the deliberative activities in which they engage (Lipman, et. al., 1980, pps. 153ff,). But for this presumption to be actualized, deliberation must be limited to contexts in which the results of deliberation do not so seriously affect the members of the community that appeals to *prima facie* equality must be overruled in the name of desired outcomes. That is, rational deliberation must be limited to areas that are not so extreme in their consequences that limitations on the deliberative process is required. Lipman achieves this by structuring a curriculum that engages students in rational deliberation, but foregoes significant deliberation about matters of immediate concern for which policy decisions are required. (ibid, p. 45; and see chapter 5, for a description of

the particulars). Critical thinking requires that all points of view be reasonably considered and assessed. Governance requires decisions that are too important to risk equal treatment in deliberative activities and equal participation in policy making. Therefore, critical thinking must recommend limiting rational deliberation to those contexts for which errors in reasoning are not fatal, contexts in which students can learn from their mistakes without suffering the consequences of faulty judgment. Lipman sees philosophical problems as articulated in Philosophy for Children as ideal for this purpose. Others, disagreeing about the adequacy of these materials, may substitute alternative content. But what must be common in whatever approach chosen, is that children be permitted to engage in rational deliberation as equals, and so must be limited in what they deliberate about. That is to say, children must learn deliberative strategies by focusing on those issues that permits treating them as equals, enabling them to change and grow in a fashion that is not inimical to their immediate or long-range disadvantage.

4. Final thoughts.

As might have been expected, the discussion offered here supports critical thinking as among the most reasonable educational tools for developing rational deliberation relevant to democratic education. The reason for the claim is that, as shown by contrast with other approaches, critical thinking offers a rich normatively relevant account of rational and deliberative process. It affords a critical focus on both principles of reasoning and considerations of the particulars that determine context. It prompts the consideration of the widest range of relevant alternatives, and promotes positive change through self-correction. Critical thinking, thus, helps students to apply information with an appreciation of the concepts used to organize both the information and its application; and iy helps them come to judgment. In doing so, critical thinking helps students to focus on their own rational procedures through interactive deliberation, expressed in dialogue, and within a supportive community of equals. This mirrors the ideal speech situation, and the democratic vision that sees all citizens as having, prima facie, equal value as participants in a process of deliberation that results in rational consent. Critical thinking theorists have extended their view to include the social and political context within which education and deliberation takes place. This parallels, in direction, if not in detail and sophistication, the extension of rational critique to the "socially repressed," typical of Habermas and others. Interestingly, critical thinking advocates, just as does Habermas, see an essential role for dialogue in the ongoing reconstruction of reasoning as a social practice. On both views, progressive and reconstructive dialogue must be open to all competing points of view. And so, critical thinking bridges critical theory and practice, offering a possible mechanism for education for democracy that speaks to deep motives that underlie democracy as an expansive ideal. Thus, critical thinking reaches out to more sophisticated theories of social reasoning, while satisfying the core insights that characterize democracy.

Much more needs to be learned about critical thinking. More elaborate analyses are required if it is to find support in fundamental theories of social and political discourse. Critical thinking, characteristically fallibilist and pluralist, is still foundationalist, and heavily dependent on informal logic models of reasoning. In this, critical thinking can draw support from Habermas, but it must look to challenges from more radical "post-modern" critiques. In addition, the relation between the social vision in critical thinking and trends in the sociology of education has yet to be explored. All of these offer fertile ground for speculation, especially in light of critical thinking's concern with the reform of practice.

The relationship between critical thinking and empirical psychology requires analysis as well. Some conflicts between critical thinking and developmentalism have been mentioned here. More challenging, perhaps, is the relation of critical thinking's typical, and often covert, psychological assumptions to the complex models of human understanding available from cognitive psychologists and theorists of intelligence, both artificial and natural. Critical thinking must address the welter of approaches in empirical psychology and sociology, and speak to the various issues that arise when critical thinking is seen in light of both detailed and theoretic empirical understanding. In addition, the critical thinking movement has not yet consolidated around particular pedagogical models, nor carefully addressed the relationship of critical thinking to other educational ideals, for example, mastery of content and cultural transmission.

Theoretical and practical research in critical thinking is increasing in quantity and quality; much more is required. Hopefully, the brief survey that this paper affords will motivate those interested in democratic education to look more closely at recent developments in critical thinking, so as to better assess its relevance for achieving desirable social and political ends through education for democracy. This will, in addition, enable theorists and practitioners of democratic education to add to the available understanding of the promise of educational reform that critical thinking affords.

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